NOSTALGIA

City's past role in helping displaced persons from European crises

***MIKE PETTY** AND **JAMES MILNER** LOOK THROUGH THE **CAMBRIDGE NEWS** ARCHIVES AT SOME OF THE STORIES FROM THIS DAY IN THE PAST*

Enid Porter

Looking back at county traditions – 1969

THOSE who yearn for the simple life of bygone years should read one of the finest works on the subject published by Enid Porter in *Cambridgeshire Customs and Folklore.*

Her volume contains original material and will be one of the standard works of reference on the subject.

A world of superstitions and events come to life showing the old-fashioned man was bugged by the seasons of the year, the weather, his beliefs and traditions.

Honeysuckle was never brought into a Fenland home where there were young girls: it gave them erotic dreams

Women were not allowed to work in hemp fields for fear it would make them barren. However, older women smoked it – it provided an alternative to poppy tea, which was equally stupefying.

Bundling was an old Fenland custom in which pre-marital intercourse was allowed and accepted by the parents of enamoured young people.

But, at Shelford, couples who produced their first child more than nine months after marriage were given a 10s reward.

Yugoslav president witnesses mid-air collision – 1953

YUGOSLAV president Marshal Tito saw two Meteor jets collide in mid-air and crash in flames as he was watching an air display at Duxford airfield.

He jumped to his feet in horror as a great burst of red flame rose hundreds of feet into the air behind some trees at Chrishall. They were two of the four jets which had swept past his armchair before taking off.

From their open cockpits the pilots each gave an "eyes left" to the marshal who saluted back.

Just after the crash, there was a poignant moment when the two surviving Meteors touched down. Tito rose from his armchair, stood to attention and saluted the planes in tribute to the dead pilots.

Displaced workers in court on ration charges – 1948

CONCERN as to whether men at the European Voluntary Workers camp, Bottisham, were getting their correct ration of food was expressed by the chairman of the Bottisham magistrates when three of them appeared before the courts on charges involving bread units.

The proceedings took one-and-a-half hours due to the fact that two of the men spoke German and the other Yugoslav. Each case therefore had to be dealt with separately.

It was said that there has been almost a trade amongst the displaced persons with regard to bread.

They have been going into Cambridge very frequently and been obtaining the bread at the shops there and taking it back to the camp where they sell it at the rate of from 2s 6d to 3s a lb.

Nuclear energy team set up – 1946

MAGISTRATES were told a special organisation had been set up to handle the problem of nuclear energy.

Sir Wallace Akers was appointed director to supervise nuclear research in November, 1941.

Work was carried out by teams working in various universities and industrial laboratories. One was in the Cavendish Laboratory at Cambridge.

Dr Nunn May worked there and was required to sign a secrecy undertaking. At the end of 1942, he went to Canada where he was a member of the nuclear physics division and had knowledge of the physics work carried on in connection with his research.

He was also a member of two committees which gave him access to secret reports. He would be informed of the latest developments in connection with the use and production of uranium.

Dr May was a scientist of repute and, prior to his case, had borne an exemplary character.

A document would enable a scientist to determine important nuclear physical data which would, in certain circumstances, be of use to an enemy.

There was strong feeling among many scientists that contributions like atomic research should not be kept to one country.

College suffers fire damage – 1941

EXTENSIVE damage was done by a fire which broke out in the north wing of Pembroke College in the early hours of Saturday.

The fire is believed to have started in one of the bedrooms of an upper storey, and the flames quickly spread along the whole length of the block under the roof.

A fire-watcher raised the alarm, and regular and auxiliary firemen were soon on the scene with several trailer pumps, in addition to the three regular engines.

Fire squads from the laboratories across the road and the college fire squad also assisted in fighting the flames. They had secured such a hold, however, that it was two hours before they could be brought under control.

Most of the damage due to the flames was in the roof and upper part of the block, but the thousands of gallons of water poured on the fire soaked through to the lower rooms.

Many of the occupants of the block were roused from their beds when the seriousness of the outbreak was discovered, and some of them assisted in removing furniture to the court.

The treasurer of the college, Mr. J. T. Spittle, said: "It is impossible yet to estimate the damage, as we cannot get into some of the rooms. The damage, however, is extensive."

Vicarage transformed for Basque refugees – 1938

CAMBRIDGE Spanish refugee relief organisation had transformed Pampisford Vicarage, which had been practically derelict.

Twenty-nine Basque children had arrived on June 19, 1937, the youngest aged seven, all fresh from their tragic experiences. The hostel had moved in January to number 1 Salisbury Villas.

The children had all lost one parent and to send them back would be cruelty; they did not know where some of their guardians were and one lad would face the firing squad if he returned.

But if donations were not forthcoming, they would soon run out of funds.

Demolition starts in city centre – 1930

DEMOLITION work has just begun on the Sidney Street corner of Sussex Street as a first step towards the most important reconstruction scheme for the improvement of Cambridge in many years.

Sidney Sussex College will develop the whole site on modern

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